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ABSTRACT

The Official Language Act of 1974 designates French as the official language of the Province of Quebec and contains provisions intended to enhance the status and power of the French language. It also provides for instruction in English as a Second Language (ESL). A poll recently conducted in Montreal revealed that sixty percent of parents whose children attend French schools are dissatisfied with the teaching of English as a second language. The study reported in this article examines the demographic characteristics, English language competence, professional training, and attitudes of a selected group of ESL teachers. The respondents were 112 elementary and secondary school teachers enrolled in two government-sponsored retraining programs. The teachers were found to be native speakers of French with a tenuous grasp of English and a doubtful knowledge of Anglo-Canadian culture. They display a low level of awareness of the socio-cultural implications of teaching English. The lack of representation of Anglophones allows little scope for breaking down the communication gap between Quebec's English and French populations. It is proposed that (1) teacher-training programs include the study of English literature and socio-psychological aspects of language acquisition, and (2) the responsibility for ESL be transferred to Anglophone teachers. (AMH)

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ENGLISH AS THE SECOND LANGUAGE IN QUEBEC:

A TEACHER PROFILE

A paper presented
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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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ENGLISH AS THE SECOND LANGUAGE IN QUEBEC:

A TEACHER PROFILE[1]

The Official Language Act (Bill No 22) enacted in 1974 by the National Assembly of the Province of Quebec has designated French as the official language of the Province. The act contains provisions to enhance the status and power of the French language by making it the sole official working language at all levels of government and industry. Thus, French has become the language of communication within the government; French is to be used by the public utilities and professional corporations (e.g. doctors, lawyers, psychologists) to communicate with the public and with the government; and French will be used at every level of business activity. One of the provisions of the act (Chapter 5) stipulates that the language of instruction in the schools of the province will be French. There will continue to be instruction in English for those children whose mother tongue is English, or for pupils who can demonstrate that they have a sufficent knowledge of English. However, all future immigrants will be directed toward French schools. English and French will continue to be taught as second languages. According to new language legislation now being drafted (Bill 1), enrolment in English schools will in future be restricted to children whose parents were educated in Quebec's English elementary schools. All immigrants, including those who are native speakers of English will be sent to French schools.

1: The research was supported by a grant from the Université de Montréal to A. d'Anglejan and from the Québec Ministry of Education to A. d'Anglejan and G. R. Tucker.

By virtue of the changes resulting from the implementation of Quebec's Official Language Act, it should soon be possible for any Quebecer to be educated, and to conduct his business and social life, entirely in French. Indeed, this situation now prevails in most rural areas of the Province. Nonetheless, it is clear that no matter what the future political status of the Province may be --that of a separate unilingual French state or a member of the bilingual Canadian Confederation --its geographic location in a vast English speaking continent and its high level of industrialization will perpetuate the need for a cadre of citizens possessing a sound knowledge of English.

At the present time many French Canadians are fluent in English as well as French. This is particularly true in the Montreal area, where the two linguistic groups come into contact in the sphere of business and commerce. Traditionally, it was the French Canadian who mastered English while the English Canadian remained monolingual. French parents often enrolled their children in the English school system for part of their schooling to assure that they would gain a good working knowledge of the language. Other French Canadians picked up the language at work in business or industry, where they mingled with anglophones.

The repercussions of official language policies and explicit nationalistic sentiments are making it more possible and indeed more socially acceptable for the Quebec francophone to remain monolingual.

It will soon no longer be possible for the French-speaking child nor for the children of immigrants from other countries to enroll in the English public school system. Furthermore, since by law the language of work at all levels of business and industry is to be French, such children will be unlikely to acquire English skills on the job. Thus, the responsibility for assuring a working knowledge of English to those who so desire, has shifted to the French school system. Quebec's Official Language Act specifies that "the Minister of Education must also take the necessary measures to ensure instruction in English as a second language to pupils whose language of instruction is French". However, no more specific objectives are set out and it is clear that bilingualism for francophone Quebecers is not a governmental priority. Indeed, unilingualism is the stated goal of the government's forthcoming language legislation. In the past, French Canadians appear to have learned English in spite of rather than because of the formal teaching of ESL in schools.

While there is ambivalence among educators and some parents in the francophone community toward the teaching of English, the province's ethnic communities (Italians, Greeks) are strongly in favour of a solid English programme for their children and have questioned the ability and willingness of the French school system to provide quality ESL instruction.

A pool was recently conducted on behalf of the Commission des Ecoles Catholiques de Montréal, the largest school board in the province.

It sampled the attitudes of different sets of parents toward the teaching of second languages in the board's schools. Sixty percent of parents whose children attend French schools expressed dissatisfaction with the teaching of ESL. The majority of these parents favoured the introduction of ESL at the beginning of the elementary school cycle. Furthermore, 80% believed that the early introduction of ESL would not have deleterious effects on a child's mastery of his mother tongue.

While there is little reason to anticipate an increase in the amount of time allocated to the teaching of English as a second language in Quebec, given the current emphasis on the enhancement and preservation of French, there is an obvious need to evaluate and to heighten the effectiveness of the present allocation of resources for this purpose. The present study represents a first step in a broad interdisciplinary research program designed to examine systematically diverse aspects of the teaching and learning of English as a second language in Quebec. Given the important future role to be played by the Province's ESL teachers it seemed appropriate to gather information concerning their background, professional training and attitudes.

The Survey.

A 43-item questionnaire comprising multiple-choice and open-ended questions was devised and pretested. The questions were designed to elicit demographic, sociocultural and pedagogical information from

experienced teachers of ESL. This paper will focus on the salient points of our findings.

Demographic Characteristics

The respondents were 112 elementary and secondary school teachers enrolled in government-sponsored intensive teacher re-training programs at Concordia University and the Université de Montréal. They were drawn from several of the eight successive groups to go through the program and were felt to be representative of the 885 teachers selected to participate in the course which was set up with the goal of improving the qualifications of teachers now teaching English in various parts of Quebec. Most of the 31 elementary level teachers taught general subjects as well as ESL. The 81 secondary level teachers were generally ESL "specialists," that is, their main assignment was the teaching of English. Their professional qualifications for the job will be described below.

The majority of the respondents (62%) were under 35 years of age. The sample included almost equal numbers of men (53%) and women (47%). In terms of socioeconomic status, 93% were from blue collar backgrounds. Of our representative group of teachers, fewer than 2% were native speakers of English; 92% described themselves as French Canadians, and 4% as

French. It should be pointed out that 25% of Montreal's population is English-speaking. Another 200,000 anglophones are scattered around the rest of the province, mainly in towns and farming communities in southern Quebec near the American border. With this vast pool of native speakers of English to draw on, it seems difficult to understand why virtually none are employed as teachers of English in the French schools of Quebec.

This fact is both puzzling and worrisome. De Bagheera (1971, 1974) surveyed the attitudes of Franco-Ontarians and Franco-Quebecers toward the learning of English and found that those displaying the highest mean level of attitude in both groups prefered Canadian native speakers of English rather than non-natives, as teachers of ESL.

The Respondents' English Language Competence

Given the importance of the English language media (radio and TV), the large anglophone minority group in Quebec and the proximity of the United States, one might expect that the second language competence of these teachers would be superior to that of their counterparts, for example, teachers of French in California or Florida, where French is almost non-existent. Our findings once more proved surprising. When asked to rate their English competence, compared with their French, on a five point-rating scale ranging from 1-nil to 5-excellent, a technique reported by Macnamara (1969) to correlate positively with direct measures of competence, the mean ratings for both understanding and reading were

3.6, and even lower, 3.1 and 3.0 respectively, for speaking and writing.

These low self-ratings are confirmed by group scores on the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency administered to students entering the retraining programs. The average score for the total number of students who have been retrained at the Université de Montréal and Concordia University is 83. According to test norms, a score of 91 is a suggested minimum requirement for students entering a program of higher education taught through the medium of English. Our respondents as a group are thus below the level which might realistically be set as a goal for their own students at the end of their secondary studies who might have to use English texts in their university studies, or who might wish to seek training in other parts of North America where English is the medium of instruction.

For almost all respondents, writing was a skill that had been learned in school, but only half had learned to speak English at school. The remainder, in almost equal proportions, claimed to have acquired this ability at home, in the neighborhood, at work, through travel or through a combination of these experiences. Very few of the teachers reported that they now use English at school, at home or with friends.

These findings would seem to substantiate the results of a study by Simard and Taylor (1973) who questioned English and French Quebecers about their social contacts and recorded detailed information concerning recent conversations. Of the

total number of social contacts recorded, 99.9 % were with members of the same language group ! Since listening to the radio or watching TV in English was fairly common, one might be justified in supposing that the accessibility of the English media in Quebec may have been useful for many in acquiring oral English skills.

The Teachers' Formal Training in English

Few teachers had studied English for any great length of time at elementary school. A more typical pattern was four years of study at secondary school and two years at post-secondary institutions. Few (22%) had ever studied an academic subject taught in English.

Twenty-one percent of the teachers said that they had received ESL training before attending their current program. A handful had also been trained to teach French as a second language. Despite their lack of specialized training, few of them were neophytes in TESL. They, in fact, averaged eight and a half years of teaching experience.

The Teachers' Attitudes Toward Teaching in General

Two open-ended questions (questions 21 & 22) probed respondents' attitudes toward their profession. The aspect of teaching which they liked best was the opportunity to work with and to communicate with young people. They also mentioned the pleasure of witnessing learning

taking place on the part of their students. Many seemed conscious of the fact that they were communicating something more than just a body of knowledge. While they were undoubtedly communicating an attitude to life, to work, and to the world, we know virtually nothing about their students' perception of the "hidden agenda" of their classes, notably teacher's feelings about English.

The aspect of teaching they disliked most varied considerably from respondent to respondent. They cited student problems, such as a lack of discipline and motivation, and large classes more frequently than administrative burdens, or problems with the bureaucracy of the school, school commission or government. Interestingly, they made no mention of having to face hostility or negative attitudes toward the learning of English on the part of their students.

Why did the Respondents Become ESL Teachers ?

Only 25% of the total number of responses were unambiguously positive about the choice of their present career in TESL. (question 25), stating that they were teaching English out of interest or, because of specialized training. Half of the respondents referred to the lack of alternative job opportunities or to the fact that there were too many teachers in the field in which they had actually been trained to teach. Some used the expression "choix forcé" -- Hobson's choice. A quarter of the responses to this important open-ended question were vague, or neutral, such as "there was a vacant post" or, "by chance".

These answers are thus often at variance with the models of the foreign language teacher portrayed by Smith (1971) or Fishman (1975). These writers propose that the teacher must identify emotionally and positively with the language that he teaches. Fishman, in particular, urges that teachers should be aware of and comfortable with the intimate link between language and ethnicity. He pleads that "language teachers must go out of their way to stress that for its culturally intact native speakers a language is far more than a code and even far more than communication. Language is a corpus mysticum" (1975, p. 6).

De Bagheera (1974) found that teachers who were involved in second language teaching as a calling rather than a job had students with the most positive attitudes toward second language learning.

In a subsequent question (#31), the teachers were asked for brief descriptions of what ESL signified to them. They nearly all responded in general, instrumental terms. Very few brought up the possibility of making friends with English-Canadians, or understanding their culture. The emerging picture of English language teaching in Quebec is that of a foreign language similar to that reflected in the survey of English in ten countries carried out by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (Lewis and Massad, 1975).

The Teachers' Attitude Toward ESL

First of all, our respondents saw English as being important, at least as a school subject. Seventy-nine percent thought that it should be a compulsory subject for all Quebec students. Almost half believed that Quebec francophones should begin studying it in kindergarten or first grade, instead of the present grade five. Roughly equal numbers believed that it should begin in either second, third, fourth or fifth grade. Only 8% felt that it should be left until secondary school. The reason for these opinions was evident in the responses to the next question in the instrument which asked if they considered an ability to express oneself in English to be important for their own children. The answer was a resounding "very important" --4.8 on the five point scale. These answers coincided perfectly with those given by the hundreds of Montreal parents in the survey mentioned earlier. The correspondence extends also to the next question (#28) which asked if the existing school programs were sufficient for their children to learn English well. Thirty eight percent said unequivocally no and a further 57% said "perhaps," but only with the help of extra classes, summer camps, etc. Four percent answered "yes."

Thus both parents and teachers have expressed dissatisfaction with the present ESL program in Quebec's French schools. In defense of the schools, one could say, with McNamara (1973), that classrooms provide impoverished environments for second language learning. The

as just one more subject on the curriculum. Indeed, while the teachers clearly expressed the view that ESL is highly important for the future of Quebec's students in general and their own children in particular, and that the present program is inadequate, they appeared to feel that ESL is not perceived by others as a critical subject in the curriculum. The absence of any official clear-cut goals for the teaching of English seems to be reflected in a laisser-faire atmosphere in the schools.

What Actually Happens in their ESL classes ?

The teachers saw themselves as emphasizing the spoken language over the written. They reported using audio and visual aids frequently and making great use of pronunciation and grammar exercises. Unfortunately, communicative activities were much less common, and student talking time was usually estimated at being less than half of the total class time available. Second-language learning in formal settings was seen by them as basically being a habit-forming process. Few teachers appeared to have a dynamic, learner-centered view of language learning.

The teachers' responses to this (pedagogical) section of the questionnaire showed them to be fairly faithful adherents to the audio-lingual tenets of the early 1960's.

What Is Their Portrait of the Ideal ESL Teacher in Quebec ?

We have mentioned earlier the ambivalent feelings held by the

fact remains, however, that as a result of new language policies the ESL classroom has suddenly become the only environment in which the average Quebec Francophone or immigrant child will be exposed to English.

When asked in an open-ended question (#30) to describe the obstacles preventing the effective teaching of ESL, respondents cited professional problems (63% of the responses), social-psychological factors (motivation and attitude were mentioned in 23% of the responses), and cultural nationalism (11% of the responses).

In a subsequent open-ended question (#42) delving deeper into the respondents' view about the most important problems facing the teacher of English in Quebec, the students' lack of motivation was mentioned in 23% of the responses. Some summarized this attitude as "English is not important". A few mentioned the lack of opportunity for English practice outside class. Only two respondents mentioned negative parental attitudes. The vast majority of the responses were concerned with pedagogical problems, such as too many students, too few classes, pronunciation problems --their own and those of their students-- the lack of discipline, or personal inadequacies in English. Not a single teacher mentioned the socio-political implications of teaching the language which traditionally has been associated with big business, landlords, the federal government --in short, cultural and economic domination. Their answers to this version of the same question that was asked in various ways betray the fact that many look on English

teachers about the problems associated with teaching ESL in the French schools of Quebec, and the low level of consciousness about the socio-cultural implications of teaching English, the second language of Quebec, and the only major language of the other nine provinces and two territories of Canada.

In the very last item on the questionnaire, the teachers were invited to describe the ideal teacher of ESL in Quebec. All but 12 of the 159 different responses (some teachers made more than one), could be subsumed under the general category of Professional Capabilities. The most frequently cited characteristic of the ideal English teacher was that he should be a fluent or native speaker of the target language. "An ability to motivate his students" was mentioned in only six responses, as was "being convinced of the need to learn English". No mention was made of ethnicity, nor of the need to provide a model of English-speaking culture.

Certainly, English is a useful language for getting ahead, but it is also the language of poets, writers and artists. Intrigued at the apparent lack of awareness on the part of our respondents regarding the cultural aspects of language teaching, we queried one class of teachers undergoing retraining about their knowledge of the names of English novelists and poets. Thirteen of the sixteen respondents were unable to name a single Canadian novelist; eleven were unable to name a Canadian poet. Even more surprising was that two could not name any English novelist (American, British or Canadian) and seven could not name any English poets. While these responses were from

an extremely limited sample of teachers and are presented simply as anecdotes and not as data they suggest that the purely instrumental orientation of the teachers' attitudes toward the teaching of English might be the result of their lack of knowledge of the anglophone community and its culture.

Summary and Conclusions

We are fully aware that our sample of respondents drawn from teachers in retraining programs, may not be representative of all ESL teachers in Quebec. At the time our research was undertaken we had not yet received authorization to sample teachers in the various school boards. However, this has now begun and we hope to compare responses from a sample of teachers who have not undergone retraining with that upon which the present study was based. Thus, we shall continue to draw inferences cautiously.

In this preliminary survey of Quebec's ESL teachers we have studied the demographic characteristics, English language competence, professional training and attitudes of a sample of teachers enrolled in two teacher retraining programs in the Province. We have found the teachers to be native speakers of French with a tenuous grasp of English and a doubtful knowledge of Anglo-Canadian culture. They seem genuinely concerned with pedagogical problems involved in the teaching of English, but display a surprisingly low level of awareness of the socio-cultural implications of teaching English, the language of the principal minority group in the Province, and the only major language of the nine other provinces of Canada.

Indeed, our findings indicate that the requirement set out in the Official Language Act that English must be taught is indeed being respected, but one must raise serious doubts as to whether English is actually being effectively learned in the province's classrooms. According to teachers and parents, it is not. We believe that this issue will become increasingly serious as English is progressively and rapidly phased out from the business, institutional and professional spheres. One undesirable outcome might be the creation of a bilingual technocratic élite in which monolingual French speaking Quebecers would be underrepresented, or that such an élite would be restricted to members of the upper socio-economic brackets who can afford the luxury of summer camps or foreign travel as a means of assuring the development of English language skills by their children.

Of even greater concern, we believe, is that the lack of representation of anglophones in the ESL teaching profession allows little scope for a breaking down of the communication gap between Quebec's English and French populations. Serious doubts can be raised as to the ability of Quebec's ESL teachers, as represented by this sample, to convey to their students a fine-grained protrait of Quebec's speakers of English and their cultural values. We would propose that teacher training programs must include the study of English literature, particularly Canadian writers, and socio-psychological aspects of language acquisition. They should not be limited to the development of pedagogical abilities. In these days of tension and uncertainty as Quebecers debate their political options, surely

every possible measure should be taken to insure that all our young people develop a knowledge and respect for the culture of the majority and minority groups. We believe that this can best be achieved by the gradual transfer of the responsibility for the teaching of English to anglophone teachers, just as in Quebec's English schools, over the past ten years anglophone teachers of French as a second language have progressively been replaced by native speakers of French.

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MICHIGAN TEST: ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

RESULTS OBTAINED BY TEACHERS
UPON THEIR ADMITTANCE
TO THE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
EQUATED SCORED

DATE	GROUP	TEACHERS	AVERAGE	91<
SEPT. 75	I	24	74.34	2
FEV. 76	II	17	80.50	0
SEPT. 76	III	17	86.74	5
FEV. 77	IV	14	91.00	9

TOTAL: 72 TEACHERS.
GENERAL AVERAGE: 81.4
SCORING 91< : 16 TEACHERS, 22%

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SAMPLED TEACHER DESCRIPTION, N=112 S

SEX	AGE	NATIVE TONGUE	ETHNIC ORIGIN
M:53%	-25Y : 3%	FRENCH : 9[illegible]%	FRENCH CANAD. : 93%
F:47%	25-34: 59%	ENGLISH: 2%	FOREIGN FRENCH: 4%
	35-44: 29%	OTHERS : 1%	OTHERS : 3%
	45Y+ : 9%		

TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN NUMBERS OF YEARS

ELEMENTARY LEVEL.....	8.01 Y
HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL.....	8.87 Y
COLLEGIAL LEVEL.....	3.00 Y

SUBJECT TAUGHT

ESL.....	66%
ESL + OTHER.....	29%
OTHER THAN ESL.....	5%

QUESTION: HAVE YOU RECEIVED SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHER TRAINING ?

	NO	YES 1970 OR EARLIER	YES 1971 OR LATER
ESL	79%	10%	11%
FSL	95%	- 2%	- 4%
OTHER	100%		

QUESTION: IN COMPARISON WITH YOUR NATIVE TONGUE EVALUATE YOUR COMPETENCE IN ENGLISH

	NIL 1	2	3	4	EXCEL-LENT 5	$\bar{X}$	S
ORAL COM-PREHENSION	-2%	-4%	34%	50%	11%	3,643	0,793
SPEAKING	-4%	16%	54%	23%	-4%	3,071	0,824
READING	4%	6%	28%	54%	8%	3,571	0,867
WRITING	4%	14%	64%	13%	5%	3,000	0,805

WHERE DID THEY LEARN ENGLISH

SKILL / PLACE	TO WRITE	TO SPEAK
SCHOOL	96%	54%
HOME	1%	7%
NEIGHBORHOOD	0	8%
WORK	2%	6%
TRAVELS	0	14%
COMBINATIONS	1%	10%
RADIO-TV	0	1%

SCHOOLING RECEIVED IN ESL

LEVEL \ YEARS	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ELEMENTARY	47%	12%	26%	14%	1%	-	-	-
HIGH SCHOOL	17%	1%	6%	12%	38%	21%	4%	1%
COLLEGIAL	38%	15%	32%	6.5%	6.5%	0	1%	1%
UNIVERSITY	76%	13%	7%	2%	3%	-	-	-
OTHER	96%	3%	1%	-	-	-	-	-

Q. 12 DO YOU HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY OF MAKING USE OF ENGLISH TO DISCUSS PROFESSIONAL MATTERS?

ALL FIGURES SHOW THE PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS	NEVER	SELDOM	AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK	AT LEAST ONCE A DAY	MANY TIMES
WITH OTHER TEACHERS	47	29	10	7	6
WITH SUPERIORS	79	13	3	1	3
WITH STUDENTS OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM	58	19	2	6	13

Q 13. DO YOU HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY OF MAKING USE OF ENGLISH ELSWHERE THAN AT WORK ?

ALL FIGURES SHOW THE PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS	NEVER	SELDOM	AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK	AT LEAST ONCE A DAY	MANY TIMES A DAY
READING FOR YOUR PERSONAL ENJOYMENT, NEWSPAPERS, NOVELS ETC.	4	33	44	12	8
READING FOR PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT	16	41	25	13	5
FOR RADIO, TV AND CINEMA	12	14.	21	29	23
FOR FAMILY CONVERSATIONS	50	29	5	5	11
FOR CONVERSATIONS WITH ANGLOPHONES FRIENDS	31	40	15	4	9

QUESTION: WHEN SHOULD THE TEACHING OF ESL START?

KINDER	26%
GRADE I.....	22%
GRADE II.....	4%
GRADE III,.....	12%
GRADE IV.....	17%
GRADE V.....	9%
GRADE VI.....	1%
HIGH SCHOOL.....	8%

QUESTION: HOW IMPORTANT IS THE MASTERY OF ENGLISH FOR YOUR CHILDREN PRESENT AND/OR FUTURE ?

NOT IMPORTANT				VERY IMPORTANT
1	2	3	4	5
0	0	2%	13%	86%

QUESTION: COULD YOUR CHILDREN PRESENT AMD/OR FUTURE, MASTER ENGLISH THROUGH THE PROGRAM IN FORCE WITHIN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM ?

- NO, THE PROGRAM IS INSUFFICIENT..... 38%
- PERHAPS, BUT ONLY WITH THE HELP OF SUPPLEMENTARY COURSES, SUMMER CAMPS, ETC..... 58%
- YES, AND WITHOUT SUPPLEMENTARY COURSES..... 4%

QUESTION: WITH REFERENCE TO ESL, EVALUATE THE IMPORTANCE FOR YOUR STUDENTS OF THE SKILLS INDICATED BELOW.

	NOT IMP. 1	2	3	4	VERY IMP. 5	$\bar{X}$	S
UNDERSTANDING	1%	2%	15%	21%	57%	4.270	0.993
READING	6%	27%	28%	21%	18%	3.18	1.192
SPEAKING	4%	5%	17%	19%	55%	4.168	1.123
WRITING	18%	30%	28%	19%	5%	2.63	1.134
TRANSLATING	22%	27%	27%	12%	12%	2.656	1.273

QUESTION: IN THE MASTERY OF ESL, EVALUATE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FOLLOWING

	NOT IMP. 1	2	3	4	VERY IMP. 5	$\bar{X}$	S
PRONUNCIATION	2%	4%	8%	27%	59%	4,368	0,92
GRAMMAR	1%	18%	30%	24%	27%	3,585	1,10
VOCABULARY & MEANING	-	-	11%	15%	74%	4,623	0,68